

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 03265 01 OF 03 261749Z

45

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USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 03265

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, GW, WB, FR, US, UK, UR

SUBJECT: DIE WELT REPORT THAT THREE ALLIES CONSIDER

MEETINGS OF BUNDESTAG COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND

PRESIDIUM IN BERLIN TO BE INCOMPATIBLE

WITH QA

REFS: (A) STATE 45655; (B) BONN 1862; (C) STATE

2117

SUMMARY: DIE WELT HAS FRONTPAGED A STORY IN
FEB. 26 EDITIONS ALLE GING THAT THE ALLIES HAVE
RESPONDED TO A BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT RENGEL LETTER BY
SAYING MEETING IN BERLIN OF BUNDESTAG PRESIDIUM AND
COUNCIL OF ELDERS WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE QA.
DPA HAS REPORTED DEPARTMENT'S DENIAL (REF A) AND A
DENIAL BY RENGEL THAT ANY SUCH EXCHANGE EVER TOOK PLACE.
BONN GROUP HAS AGREED ON PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE,
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PAGE 02 BONN 03265 01 OF 03 261749Z

INTER ALIA, AT REGULAR FEB. 26 FRG PRESS CONFERENCE.

END SUMMARY

1. UNDER HEADLINE "SERIOUS ALLIED RESERVATIONS ON BONN MEETINGS IN BERLIN," FEBRUARY 26 EDITIONS OF DIE WELT CARRY FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ALLEGING THE FOLLOWING:

- A. BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT RENGGER WROTE THE ALLIES ASKING THEIR ATTITUDE CONCERNING MEETINGS OF THE BUNDESTAG COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND PRESIDUM IN BERLIN;
- B. "AFTER A LENGTHY LEGAL EXAMINATION," THE ALLIES CONCLUDED THAT SUCH MEETINGS WERE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE QA;
- C. THIS DECISION WAS COMMUNICATED TO RENGGER VIA AN "OFFICIAL LETTER;"
- D. IN REACHING THEIR DECISION, THE ALLIES DID NOT CONSULT WITH THE BUNDESTAG (SIC);
- E. "IN BONN ONE THINKS THAT THE NEW POSITION OF THE ALLIES HAS BEEN TAKEN IN LIGHT OF THE SOVIETS. MOSCOW HAS IN THE PAST PROTESTED SHARPLY AGAINST DELIBERATIONS OF BUNDESTAG COMMITTEES IN BERLIN;"
- F. OPPOSITION BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES HAVE "REPEATEDLY DEMANDED" THAT MEETINGS OF THE BUNDESTAG'S HIGHEST ORGANS BE HELD IN BERLIN;
- G. THE PRESIDUM HAS MET IN BERLIN FIVE TIMES, THE LAST TIME IN JUNE, 1969;
- H. THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS HAS MET IN BERLIN 17 TIMES, THE LAST TIME IN JANUARY, 1970.

2. DIE WELT ALSO CARRIES SHORT EDITORIAL ON PAGE SIX LAMENTING THE SUPPOSED ALLIED POSITION, AND POINTING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BONN 03265 01 OF 03 261749Z

AN "EVER NARROWER" ALLIED INTERPRETATION OF THE QA. IT SAYS THAT THE ALLIED PROHIBITION OF MEETINGS OF THE PRESIDUM AND COUNCIL OF ELDERS STEMS FROM THEIR CONCEPTION THAT SUCH MEETINGS WOULD CONSTITUTE DIRECT STATE AUTHORITY OVER BERLIN.

3. A FEBRUARY 26 DPA DISPATCH DATELINED BONN/WASHINGTON ALSO CARRIES REPORT OF RENGGER'S FEBRUARY 25 DENIAL OF

THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A LETTER AND A REFERENCE TO THE
DPA QUESTION POSED TO THE DEPARTMENT ON FEBRUARY 25
(REFTEL A). THE DADPA DISPATCH REPORTS THE
DEPARTMENT'S

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PAGE 01 BONN 03265 02 OF 03 261749Z

45

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 03265

ANSWER AS "THERE WAS NO SUCH NOTE SENT BY THE THREE
POWERS."

4. BONN GROUP HELD SPECIAL MEETING ON FEB. 26 TO
CONSIDER MATTER AND TO DEVELOP PRESS LINE. SINCE DIE
WELT STORY HAD MENTIONED BUNDESTAG CDU DEPUTY
WOHLRABE, ALLIED REPS WERE STRONGLY SUSPICIOUS THAT
WOHLRABE WAS BEHIND THE WELT STORY. THEY CONSEQUENTLY
ASKED FRG REP (HENZE) IF "SPEAKING NOTES"
PREPARED IN FEBRUARY (REF B) FOR POSSIBLE USE BY
CHANCELLERY OFFICIAL WITH WOHLRABE HAD ACTUALLY BEEN
USED. HENZE SAID HE COULD NOT SAY FOR SURE, BUT

IMPLIED BY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS THAT HE BELIEVED THEY HAD NOT. HENZE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW IF WOHLRABE HAD INSPIRED DIE WELT'S STORY. HE ADDED IT APPEARED THAT WOHLRABE'S JANUARY PROPOSAL (SEE REF B) FOR A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS IN BERLIN HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED FURTHER BY THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS.
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PAGE 02 BONN 03265 02 OF 03 261749Z

5. HENZE SAID IT WAS URGENT TO AGREE ON PRESS LINE SINCE FRG PRESS SPOKESMAN BOELLING WOULD BE HOLDING PRESS CONFERENCE AT 3:00 P.M. FEB. 26 AND WAS SURE TO BE ASKED ABOUT DIE WELT STORY. (COMMENT: WE WERE LATER INFORMED THAT THIS PRESS CONFERENCE HAD BEEN CANCELLED, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF FASCHING ACTIVITIES.) HENZE, SUPPORTED BY FRENCH AND BRITISH, MADE STRONG PITCH TO LIMIT FRG/ALLIED RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. US REP WAS INCLINED TO GO A BIT FURTHER AND USE BASIC LINE IN ALLIED REPLY TO SOVIET 1974 DEMARCHE (STATE 83368, APR. 24, 1974) -- THAT ABSENCE OF PROVISION IN QA FOR SUCH MEETINGS IN WSB DOES NOT MEAN THEY ARE PRECLUDED -- BALANCED BY REFERENCE TO APPARENT ABSENCE OF PRACTICAL NECESSITY FOR SUCH MEETINGS IN BERLIN.

6. AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION, AND ON BASIS OF HENZE'S ASSERTION THAT FRG WOULD MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO TALK TO WOHLRABE ON LINES OF "SPEAKING NOTES" REFERRED TO ABOVE, BONN GROUP AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING PRESS LINE:

-- A. RESPONSE TO BASIC QUESTION:

I REFER TO THE STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE BY BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT RENGEL AND BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THERE HAS BEEN NO EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN THE BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT AND THE THREE POWERS REGARDING MEETINGS OF THE BUNDESTAG PRESIDUM OR COUNCIL OF ELDERS IN BERLIN.

--B. REPLIES TO FURTHER QUESTIONS:

1. Q: HAS THE MATTER BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE THREE POWERS AND THE FRG?
A: THERE ARE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE THREE POWERS ON MATTERS REGARDING THE SPECIAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE THREE POWERS IN BERLIN. THESE CONSULTATIONS

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PAGE 03 BONN 03265 02 OF 03 261749Z

ARE CONFIDENTIAL. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF THE VIEW THAT THE QA
SHOULD BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO AND FULLY
APPLIED. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE
GUIDED BY THIS POSITION ALSO IN THE MATTER
OF POSSIBLE MEETINGS OF THE BUNDESTAG
PRESIDIUM AND COUNCIL OF ELDERS IN BERLIN.

2. Q: (QUESTIONS RE FRG POSITION ON
"LEGALITY" OF SUCH MEETINGS IN BERLIN)

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PAGE 01 BONN 03265 03 OF 03 261750Z

45

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 03265

A: (AS NO. 1, ABOVE)

3. Q: WHY HAVE THERE BEEN NO SUCH MEETINGS IN BERLIN SINCE THE EARLY 1970'S?

A: THIS IS A QUESTION BEST ANSWERED BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES OF THE BUNDESTAG.

ON "IF ASKED" BASIS, ALLIED SPOKESMEN WILL USE BASIC RESPONSE GIVEN ABOVE. ON ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, THEY WILL GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT MATTER NOT PARTICULARLY CURRENT BUT COULD BECOME A SUBJECT IN THE ROUTINE CONSULTATIONS.

7. ALLIED REPS AGREED THAT BECAUSE MATTER WAS A BUNDESTAG FEDERAL GOVERNMENT QUESTION, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR BERLIN MISSIONS TO REFER PRESS ENQUIRIES TO EMBASSIES IN BONN.
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PAGE 02 BONN 03265 03 OF 03 261750Z

8. COMMENT: IN MID-AFTERNOON DISCUSSION, FRG REP (VON ARNIM) HAS TOLD US THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND FEDERAL PRESS OFFICE (BPA) HAVE RECEIVED A FEW ENQUIRIES ON DIE WELT STORY. VON ARNIM SAID THE MAJOR INTEREST OF THE CALLERS WAS NOT DIRECTED SQUARELY AT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER BUT RATHER AT WHETHER THERE WERE PERHAPS RELEVANT FOREIGN OFFICE-RENGER COMMUNICATIONS. VON ARNIM ALSO TOLD US THAT THE AUTHOR OF THE DIE WELT PIECE (GOOS) HAD CALLED THE BPA AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE SEVERAL TIMES IN AN EFFORT TO ELICIT INFORMATION. GOOS APPARENTLY HAS BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE UNEQUIVOCAL US AND RENGHER DENIALS AND HAS CONCEDED TO FOREIGN OFFICE PRESS OFFICIALS THAT HE NOW BELIEVES NO RENGHER-ALLIED EXCHANGE OF LETTERS EVER TOOK PLACE. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO PRESS INQUIRIES ON THIS MATTER. UK AND FRENCH EMBASSIES HERE, HOWEVER, HAVE RECEIVED A FEW CALLS. THRUST OF THESE QUIRIES IS ALSO DIRECTED AT WHETHER OR NOT AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS TOOK PLACE AND NOT AT SUBSTANCE OF ALLIED POSITION ON PRESIDUM OR COUNCIL OF ELDERS MEETINGS IN BERLIN. ONE JOURNALIST TOLD THE FRENCH EMBASSY THAT WOHLRABE WAS BEHIND THE GOOS STORY.
HILLENBRAND

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